

# ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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## **QUICK ACTION HELPS MINIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGES FOLLOWING MANURE SPILL IN FAYETTE COUNTY**

MAYNARD — Quick reaction by owners of a hog confinement unit west of Maynard kept a small fish kill from becoming a much larger one following a manure spill last week.

The spill occurred Tuesday, Sept. 3 at a facility owned by New Horizons, Inc., in Fayette County when a pipe between a building and outside lagoons plugged causing manure to overflow. The manure flowed to a tributary of the Little Volga River. The fish kill effected 1.19 miles of stream, killing 12,724 fish, mostly minnows and shiners. Restitution cost was set at \$1,352.

Following instructions from the DNR, the company placed dikes on the unnamed tributary of the Little Volga River as well as further downstream on the river. Contaminated water was pumped into a manure spreader then placed back in the lagoon.

“We are fortunate that the operators of the facility acted quickly and were able to get equipment to the scene so soon. Had we not got it stopped, it would have flowed another four or five miles downstream to the city Maynard. It would not have been a pretty picture with dead fish and hog manure odors going through Maynard,” said Mike Wade, an environmental specialist with the Iowa DNR’s field office in Manchester.

Wade said accidental spills can occur with any facility, but that this was an example of how responding in a timely manner can help minimize environmental damages.

“Producers have to recognize that foreseen instances like this can occur at any time, often times when they are least expected. It’s important for producers to think ahead of time what needs to be done when something like this happens so they can react promptly to

the situation to minimize environmental damages. They also need to have emergency telephone numbers like the DNR readily available in case something like this happens,” Wade said.

The number producers should call if a manure spill occurs is (515) 281-8694.

Wade said it is also important for confinement site operators to make sure that manure is flowing to the appropriate facility when manure is being moved from one facility to another.

“I have investigated several spills where after a plug is pulled, the operators leave or do not pay attention to what happens. It is very important that whenever an operator pulls a plug to move manure from one facility to another, that the operator make sure the manure is flowing to the desired location,” Wade said.

The incident is still under investigation by the DNR.

**For more information, contact Chad Kehrli at (563) 927-2640.**

## **DNR INVESTIGATES LARGE MANURE SPILL FOLLOWING TRAGIC ACCIDENT**

WOODBINE — The DNR is investigating a large manure spill following a tragic accident more than a week ago.

An employee of Furnas County Farms was killed Tuesday, Sept. 3 in a tractor accident while land applying manure at a 20,000-head pork finishing unit northwest of Woodbine in Harrison County. An umbilical line used to pump manure was apparently ruptured and not discovered by the company until this week. The DNR wasn’t notified of the manure spill until Wednesday, Sept. 11.

The DNR was still on the scene and investigating the incident Thursday afternoon, but the investigation is hampered because so much time has elapsed since the spill occurred. It was estimated that at least 500,000 gallons of manure was spilled and would have flowed to Elk Creek, then to Willow Creek, the Boyer River and eventually to the Missouri River. Field tests taken Thursday afternoon showed extremely high levels of ammonia in some spots two miles downstream from where the spill occurred, but there was still no sign of dead fish.

The DNR was continuing its investigation downstream on Thursday.

**For more information, contact Dan Stipe at 712-243-1934.**